

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 AEC-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-01 INR-05

INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 RSC-01 SAM-01

OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-01 TRSE-00 FRB-01 PRS-01 PA-01

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R 210030Z NOV 74

FM AMCONSUL MEDAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 464

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, PINS, ID

SUBJECT: MOBIL OIL ENCOUNTERS OPPOSITION IN ACEH

1. SUMMARY: NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, SOME LOCAL ACEHENESE OPPOSITION HAS SURFACED TO MOBIL'S DEVELOPMENT OF ITS ARUN GAS FIELD. ACCOUNTS OF THIS OPPOSITION RANGE FROM DRAMATIC TALES OF HELICOPTER EVACUATION OF MOBIL WORK PARTIES TO BLAND OFFICIAL MOBIL ADMISSIONS OF A "FEW ROADBLOCKS" AND THE NEED FOR MORE PLANNING. END SUMMARY.

2. A DISAFFECTED AMERICAN EMPLOYEE OF MOBIL "LEAKED" THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT TO CONSULAR OFFICER DURING COURSE OF SOCIAL EVENING. OVER THE WEEKEND (NOV 16-17), MOBIL OIL SOIL TESTING TEAM REQUESTED AND RECEIVED EMERGENCY EVACUATION BY HELICOPTER FROM WORK SITE AFTER UNRULY CROWDS BLOCKED ALL FIVE ROADS FROM WORK SITE. CROWDS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN LED BY MOSLEM LEADERS. HE SAID THAT CROWDS HAD RAISED ISSUE OF MOBIL'S REFUSAL TO MAKE CONTRIBUTION TO AN INDEPENDENT MOSLEM UNIVERSITY IN BANDA ACEH. BUT IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THIS WAS MAIN ISSUE.

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3. A RESPONSIBLE MOBIL OFFICIAL OFFERED TO FOLLOWING COMMENTS. PROBLEMS CENTER AROUND THE RELOCATION OF ACEHENESE FARMERS TO MAKE ROOM FOR "CLUSTERS" OF GAS WELLS. THE HIGH HEAT OF THESE WELLS AND THE PIPES TO THE LNG PLANT (AROUND 220 DEGREES) WILL RENDER THE CLUSTER AREAS UNINHABITABLE. MOBIL HAD EXPERIENCED NO DIFFICULTY IN CLEARING THE FIRST CLUSTER, BUT WAS RECEIVING OPPOSITION AT THE SECOND CLUSTER. HE CONCEDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN ROAD BLOCKS AND WILLINGLY AGREED WITH THE CONSULAR OFFICER'S GAMBIT THAT THE PARA. 2 ACCOUNT WAS "DRAMATIC". HE SAID THAT MOBIL PLANNED TO MEET WITH PERTAMINA AND ACEHENESE OFFICIALS NEXT WEEK TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM.

4. PROBLEM IS COMPLICATED BY THE SIZEABLE NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO BE DISPLACED, SOME 14,000 BY UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATES, AND BY PERTAMINA'S ALLEDGED TARDINESS IN PREPARING THE PEOPLE FOR RELOCATION.

5. COMMENTS: THE ABOVE ACCOUNTS, THOUGH DIFFERING IN SENSATIONALISM, AGREE ON THE BASIC POINT THAT SOME ACEHENESE ARE ATTEMPTING TO HAMPER THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MAJOR PROJECT BY DENYING MOBIL ACCESS TO ITS WORK SITES. GIVEN THE ACEHENESE NATURE THIS IS PERHAPS INEVITABLE, BUT IT WILL TAKE ALL OF MOBIL'S PATIENCE AND TACT TO AVOID EXACERBATING A NATURALLY SENSITIVE SITUATION.
KILPATRICK

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